

On Decision of Character.

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have been apprised of his determination, and understood his character, would have smiled contemptuously to hear it insinuated that though Cassar had resolved, Caesar would not dare ; or that though he might cross the Rubicon, whose opposite bank presented to him no hostile legions, he might come to other rivers, which he would not cross ; or that either rivers, or any other obstacle, would deter him from prosecuting his determination from this ominous commencement to its very last consequence.

One signal advantage possessed by a mind of this character is, that its passions are not wasted. The whole measure of passion of which any one, with important transactions before him, is capable, is not more than enough to supply interest and energy for the required practical exertions ; therefore as little as possible of this costly flame should be expended in a way that does not augment the force of action. But nothing can less contribute or be more destructive to vigour of action, than protracted anxious fluctuation, through resolutions adopted, rejected, resumed, suspended ; while yet nothing causes a greater expense of feeling. The heart is fretted and exhausted by being subjected to an alternation of contrary excitements, with the ultimate mortifying consciousness of their contributing to no end. The long-wavering deliberation, whether to perform some bold action of difficult virtue, has often cost more to feeling than the action itself, or a series of such actions would have cost ; with the great disadvantage too of not being relieved by any of that invigoration which the man in action finds in the activity itself, that spirit created to renovate the energy which the action is expending. When the passions are not consumed among dubious musings and abortive resolutions, their utmost value and use can be secured by throwing all their animating force into effective operation.

Another advantage of this character, is, that it exempts from a great deal of interference and obstructive annoyance, which an irresolute man may be almost sure to encounter. Weakness, in every form, tempts arrogance ; and a man may be allowed to wish for a kind of character with which stupidity and impertinence may not make so free. When a firm decisive spirit is recognized, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and

leaves him room and